

prices for our citizens the way every other nation does but to try to demand that other countries raise the prices for their drugs indicates that the administration is out of touch and out of tune with the real needs and real priorities of American citizens. I urge my colleagues to join me in rejecting these proposals and ask that all members of this body work together to achieve real solutions to address the skyrocketing costs of prescription drugs.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, while we are waiting for someone from our side who will manage the issue dealing with the Internet tax, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for as much time as I may consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### FISCAL POLICY

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, while this week we will take up the Internet tax issue, which is complicated and, in some ways, controversial—and I expect it will take some time—I wanted to mention something about fiscal policy for a moment and hope that perhaps this week, or in the intervening weeks, we may take up a couple of these issues.

As you know, we have a Federal budget deficit that will be in this fiscal year the largest in the history of this country, by far. They say now there will be over a \$530 billion Federal budget deficit in this fiscal year. I think everyone understands that saddling our children and their children with debt they must pay because this President and this Congress has decided we will spend money we don't have—we will borrow it and saddle someone else with the responsibility to pay it—is wrong-headed fiscal policy. It is bad for this country; it doesn't represent a value system that we should embrace, and, second, in the long-term it retards economic growth and crushes opportunity in the future for our children and those who follow them.

My hope is we will begin to address this issue of fiscal policy. We cannot spend more for defense—nearly \$100 billion more for defense and say, by the way, we don't have to pay for it. We cannot spend more for homeland security and say it doesn't count, we don't have to pay for that. We cannot cut taxes as we spend more for defense and homeland security and, as we spend more for health care, which costs more each year, say we will just charge all that. That is not a responsible thing to do.

But we have a Federal budget that is sent to us, which comes from the President, and then the Congress works on this budget plan that says a couple of things. We know we are going to have increases in health care spending. We know that because both Medicare and Medicaid represent entitlement programs, we know the cost of health care spending is increasing. We know the President is recommending very substantial increases in costs for defense. We know the President is recommending substantial increases in spending for homeland security. We also know the President is recommending making permanent tax cuts, which at this point are temporary.

The point is that this doesn't add up. It is a fiscal policy that doesn't add up. So how could we begin to make some sense of this? There are a couple of things that have happened in recent weeks which I think we need to address. This past weekend there was a story in the Washington Post about the issue of the \$145 billion mistake that was made in the estimate of the cost of the prescription drug plan for Medicare.

We are told now from press reports that the chief actuary who works on the Medicare Program knew long before the Congress voted on a prescription drug plan in the Medicare Program that this would not cost \$400 billion, as was provided for in the budget, but, in fact, would cost over \$140 billion more than that during the 10-year period. But he was told he would be fired if he informed Congress of this information. So the Congress acted without having information that was available in the executive branch because the chief actuary, who is not partisan—he is not part of the political system, he has been a career public servant and, by all accounts, an excellent one—was told he would lose his job if he informed the Congress of what this would cost.

I think there needs to be an investigation into who threatened this person's job, who had this information and refused to turn it over to Congress, who indicated it was inappropriate for the Congress to know this information before it voted on this legislation. I believe this Congress owes it to the American people to investigate that because how can we legislate in the future on issues of this type without having adequate information or without being able to trust the information that is coming from, in this case it was Health and Human Services and from the chief actuary of the Medicare Program?

I believe one way or another in the coming weeks, we ought to find a way to investigate that circumstance. I believe we owe that to the American people.

#### FUNDING MILITARY OPERATIONS IN IRAQ

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, what I want to talk about, in addition to the

prescription drug issue, is the notion that—at the end of last week it was addressed—we would probably need more money for the military with respect to the fighting that is occurring in Iraq and Afghanistan. This Congress passed a supplemental emergency bill that was nearly \$87 billion—I believe it was just under \$87 billion—some months ago. We were told that would take us through the end of this calendar year and perhaps even a bit more.

The President's budget that was sent to us contained zero money requested for the activities in Iraq and Afghanistan. The reason the President recommended there would be no funding in the regular budget for Iraq and Afghanistan is because he and the administration said they could not estimate what it would cost; therefore, they recommend zero.

We know it is not zero. We know we are spending \$5 billion a month—\$4 billion in Iraq and \$1 billion in Afghanistan. If we are spending \$5 billion a month or \$60 billion a year, it is unfathomable to me that we get a budget request from the President that says, "I recommend nothing at this point because I will later on ask for an emergency appropriations."

Late last week we heard perhaps more money will be needed than was otherwise expected and that Congress would be asked to appropriate this on an emergency basis.

It is clear to me we will do whatever is necessary to protect the safety of the troops we have sent to Iraq. There is no question but that when we ask American men and women in uniform to fight for this country and to defend this country's interest and then to send them overseas, there is no question we have an obligation to protect them and provide for their safety. If they need more equipment, if we need to spend more money to provide for their safety, this Congress, in my judgment, is going to do that.

Let me make a point about all of this. In addition to providing the supplemental emergency funding that was necessary for the Pentagon some months ago—almost 6 months ago now—we also were requested by the President to appropriate \$20.3 billion for reconstructing Iraq.

I offered an amendment in the Senate to strike that spending. It was the largest proposed spending cut for this fiscal year that was offered in the Congress. The single largest spending cut that was offered last year is one I offered on the floor of the Senate to strike the \$20.3 billion for reconstructing Iraq.

I came up short. I had over 40 votes for the amendment, but, nonetheless, it did not prevail. I want to explain why I did that and why it has relevance today.

I proposed striking that funding for a very simple reason: We did not target Iraq's infrastructure. When we decided to displace Saddam Hussein and send American troops to Iraq, we did not